

YOUR V-DRUMS

with Ben Stone

PART 3

Welcome back to your regular drumming workshop. Practice makes perfect, or so the saying goes. Yes, I know you've heard it a thousand times before, but that doesn't make it any less true. So, in this instalment, I'll be talking practice routines with the aim of improving your style and technique, and enhancing your ability to feel music and react in different musical situations

In this issue, I will be giving you more tools to help you develop your own practice routine and find what works for you. Using the TD-3's onboard metronome and rhythm coach, I'll show you how to turn some basic rudiments into drum fills, some hand and foot co-ordination exercises and, lastly, a few variations on the rock grooves that you should have worked on from the last instalment.

Hands at the ready

Before getting your practice routine underway, take a quick look over the tips from the last issues of *PowerOn* and follow the warm-up routine that I've developed so far. This includes checking your seating position and some light stretches. Your warm-ups should take ten to 15 minutes to complete.

Turning rudiments into drum fills can be a relatively simple way of creating interesting drum fills. Based on the rudiments you've learnt so far, there are already hundreds of permutations for you to draw upon, depending on how many drums you have. However, we are going to use the paradiddle

as the basis for fills in this lesson, and although this is a fun way to create fills, it is by no means the only way.

Giving yourself time to jam on the drums for a couple of hours and seeing what comes out is also a great way to get going with fills; you could even try listening to other drummers and learning how they compose drum fills. Always be sure to work on things that you originally improvised so you can add them to your vocabulary on the drum set.

TIP: To help you remember fills and grooves, try recording a practice session using a sequencer found on the TD-6KV, TD-12KV, and TD-20K V-Drums or a tape/hard disk recording device. You can then listen back to things you played and work on them in more detail.

Firstly, let's take a look at three basic paradiddle exercises. To ensure that you don't rush these, use the TD3's basic metronome to get a starting tempo.

The first of our exercises (exercise 11) is known as the 'single paradiddle'. It is played RL, RR, LR, LL and counted:

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1 = R 3 = L
+ = L + = R
2 = R 4 = L
↓ + = R + = L

When playing these exercises, each note should be played at the same volume and as evenly as possible.

When ready, go right ahead and press CLICK, then TEMPO on the TD-3. You should hear the metronome and see the current tempo on the LED display. Change the current tempo setting to 75 bpm (beats per minute) by using the [+] and [-] buttons and run exercise 11 repeatedly until it feels comfortable.

TIP: To increase the volume level of the metronome, press the EDIT button until the little red light appears above Click Level. Then use the [+] and [-] buttons to increase the volume level compared to the drum sound.

Next up is exercise 12, the 'double paradiddle'. This is very similar to the single paradiddle in essence, except there is an extra RL before the two beats on the right hand and vice versa on the turnaround. This means that this rudiment is in 3/4 time and played RL, RL, RR, LR, LR, LL. Count this exercise as:

1 = R 1 = L
+ = L + = R
2 = R 2 = L
+ = L + = R
3 = R 3 = L
↓ + = R + = L

To complete our set of three rudiments is exercise 13, the 'triple paradiddle'. This, as you may have guessed, has an extra two beats on the right and left hand before the turnaround and vice versa on the way back. The triple paradiddle is in 4/4 time and takes a full bar until the rudiment is then reversed onto the left hand. It's counted as follows:

1 = R 1 = L + = L + = R
+ = L + = R + = R ↓ + = L
2 = R 2 = L 4 = R
+ = L + = R 4 = L
↓ 3 = R 3 = L

When playing through all of the paradiddle exercises, try to ensure that each beat has the same dynamic level or volume, so that no beats stick out. You may find that, if you're right-handed, the beats played with the right hand sound louder than the left.

TIP: To combat the natural strength difference between your right and left hands, try practising single, double and four stroke rolls slowly. Start with the left hand first, then switch to lead with the right hand and pay attention to the dynamic level of each beat.

Follow the same procedure for setting up the TD3's metronome as shown earlier and practise these three basic rudiments slowly, one by one, until you are comfortable. To help develop accuracy, use the TD3's Time Check function. Press COACH until 'tch' appears in the display and press CLICK to activate this program. This will allow you to see exactly where you are placing the beats, either behind, on or ahead of the metronome.

Also try using the Quiet Count function to help develop incredible timing. Press COACH until 'qCt' appears in the display and press CLICK to activate this program. This kind of test will really help to improve internal timing and the ability to feel different tempos.

When practising these rudiments, pay close attention to dynamics and feel.

Learning new techniques takes time, so you shouldn't be put off if it's a few weeks before you can increase your speed. Remember that everyone has a different rate of learning – just take your time and make sure the feel is correct before turning up the tempo.

Fill me in

Exercises 14, 15 and 16 are great for drum fills. This is partly because you have the choice of starting and finishing on either the right or the left hand – depending on preference or what sound you want to finish the fill on, be it a tom tom or a cymbal. They also offer a huge number of

permutations from a basic starting point. The exercises contain just some of the many variations you can play using the single, double and triple paradiddle between toms and snare.

Try playing through these exercises slowly, gradually increasing your speed, before putting them into context along with a groove when you feel comfortable.

TIP: To make even the simplest of drum fills come to life, why not try introducing different dynamic changes within the fill? Accent different beats within the drum fill – you could, for example, use beats 1 and 3. Alternatively, break it down even further and accent different eighth notes within a phrase.

Limber up!

As I've already explained, the drummer neglects his hands and his feet at his peril. Devising a separate practice routine for both will help you improve on that oft-neglected foot technique and keep your hands in tip-top shape too.

Good hand/foot co-ordination is, it goes without saying, a must for any drummer, so once you've perfected the art of practising foot and hand routines separately, it's time to combine the two. This is vitally important; too many stickmen ignore the hand/foot combo – and their drumming suffers badly as a consequence. So, to help you on the way to owning a set of arms and legs that knows what the other one is doing, let's take a look some basic co-ordination exercises.

Exercise 17 is basically a series of eighth notes, also known as a single stroke roll played between the hands and feet. There are quite a few ways to practise this type of exercise. I have included just some of the different and sometimes awkward stickings (or should that be footings?), but you can also work on your own methods of playing this relatively simple exercise.

To keep a check on how accurately the

different permutations are being played, press COACH on the TD3 until 'tch' appears in the display. Select a nice slow tempo of approximately 75 bpm by pressing the TEMPO button then [+] or [-] and activate the Time Check program by pressing CLICK. Play through exercise 17 as per the notation, then substitute the sticking information with the following variations: (H) for the hand and (F) for the foot.

1 = R (H)	1 = L (H)	1 = R (H)
+ = L (F)	+ = R (F)	+ = R (F)
2 = R (H)	2 = L (H)	2 = R (H)
+ = L (F)	+ = R (F)	+ = L (F)
3 = R (H)	3 = L (H)	3 = R (H)
+ = L (F)	+ = R (F)	+ = R (F)
4 = R (H)	4 = L (H)	4 = R (H)
+ = L (F)	+ = R (F)	+ = L (F)

1 = L (H)	↑ 1 = R (H)	1 = L (H)
+ = L (F)	+ = L (F)	+ = R (F)
2 = L (H)	2 = L (H)	2 = R (H)
+ = R (F)	+ = R (F)	+ = L (F)
3 = L (H)	3 = R (H)	3 = L (H)
+ = L (F)	+ = L (F)	+ = R (F)
4 = L (H)	4 = L (H)	4 = R (H)
↓ + = R (F)	+ = R (F)	↓ + = L (F)

The last co-ordination exercise is slightly trickier and can work very well if you play double bass drums or a double pedal. There's no need to worry if you don't, however, as you can easily substitute the left kick drum for a foot hi-hat. Exercise 18 has a triplet feel and, just like the previous exercise, can also have multiple sticking options. Follow the markings for hands and feet as per the notation to start with and see how you get on.

OK, guys and gals, that's all for now. In the next issue, I'll be covering some variations to the basic rock grooves among other things. So keep on practising and remember – 'some is better than none'.

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TD3KV / Yor V-Drums Notation - Ben Stone music

KEY

SNARE DRUM TOM 1 TOM 3 CLOSED HI HAT FOOT HI HAT CRASH CYMBAL

NOTE VALUES

BASS DRUM RIM SHOT TOM 2 GHOST NOTE OPEN HI HAT RIDE CYMBAL X-STICK

4 BEATS (SEMI BREVE) 2 BEATS (MINIM) 1 BEAT (CROCHET) 1/2 BEAT (QUAVER) 1/4 BEAT (SEMI QUAVER)

Ex 11 Single Parradiddles

Ex 12 Double Parradiddles

Ex 13 Triple Parradiddles

Ex 14 Single Parradiddle Fil

Ex 15 Double Parradiddle Fill

Ex 16 Triple Parralldle Fill

Ex 17 Co-ordination - Time Check

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

R R R R L L L L

Ex 18 Co-ordination - Time Check